

## Strolling in Houston

# Those Flowering Shrubs Do Her Inspire --- So of Making Rhymes She Doesn't Tire

By SIGMAN BYRD  
The Stroller

IF I WERE in the market for a hydrangea, which is not the case at present, I'd go out to 1421 W. 26th street and patronize Mrs. Adelaide Chapin, who throws in a poem for a gnappe whenever she sells a flowering shrub.

On odd days, Mrs. Chapin goes down to the Farmers Market, where a stall of the east side of that otherwise depressing emporium becomes a sort of branch office for her Houston Heights lathe-house. And, it was at the market that I discovered her, literally glowing with pleasure as she fed vigoro to her potted camellias, azaleas, plumbago and jasmine plants.



BYRD

## Judges Character

It was five years ago that Mrs. Chapin started out in business by growing specimen magnolia plantings. "I just drove around town during the seeding season," she said, "and whenever I saw a

magnolia tree with character I asked the owner for some of the seed. I planted them in a seed-bed, something like a tomato coldframe, and when they came up I started transplanting them."

Looking a little like a sturdy and full-blown zinnia, with her crisp, white hair, Mrs. Chapin explained that you judge a tree's character as you do a man's, by his bearing, posture and dress. And transplanting, she said, developed a seedling's character, just as travel broadens a man.

## Magnolia Poem

Pretty soon she had 1200 specimen magnolia plants in stock, and River Oaks folk were buying them like U. S. Steel. It was while she was inspecting a grove of mature trees on Waugh drive one spring that Mrs. Chapin's magnolia poem came to her like a falling petal.

*In a lovely vale secluded, where  
the great magnolias wave,  
There was born within my soul  
that day the courage of the  
brave.*

"I don't write them," the horticulturist explained. "They just come to me, out of nowhere."

Like the gardenia poem, which came on the eve of one Mother's

Day as Mrs. Chapin was potting some blossoming fortunis for market:

*Some flowers are bright and  
gay,*

*But I'd choose you for Mother's  
Day;*

*Your fragrance brings old  
smiles, new tears,*

*As memory walks the yester-  
years*

Mrs. Chapin says many people who love flowers fail to realize that the reason they do is that flowers appeal to the universal intelligence of the inner self as well as to the eye and nose. "Flowers keep me out on the highways of life, where the winds blow," she said with ecstatic smile. "Out of the shadows. What could be nicer than sending beautiful blooming things out into the world to make it lovely? I like my work so much that I could almost become an introvert."

## Lost Fortune

H. A. BURKE, a member of the Houston Fire Department for the past 11 years and now an inspector, stepped out of a Preston avenue bar, explaining he had been looking for fire hazards, and admitted that he had just about given up the notion of sharing in the Burke fortune.

Back in the thirties, things

looked brighter for fireman Burke, and 44 other claimants to the \$9,000,000 estate of the late Maj. E. A. Burke of Baton Rouge and Belize, British Honduras. But finally, even the Philadelphia lawyers began to drop out of the case, and now about the only satisfaction our Mr. Burke has left is that his uncle, the major, cleared the family name before he died.

## Mystery Check

It was in 1900, the fire inspector said, that \$100,000 vanished from the coffers of the Louisiana State Fair Assn. Naturally, the attention of the other officers was turned to Maj. Burke, who was treasurer of the organization, but he was in Honduras, where he could not be reached by telephone, mail or even extradition. So the loss was never fully explained.

Somehow or other, the major acquired several gold mines in Honduras, and in 1928 a mysterious stranger appeared in the office of the State Fair Assn., handed the new treasurer an envelope and hurried out. The envelope contained a certified draft on a New Orleans bank for \$100,000 plus 28 years of accrued interest.

Mr. Burke says the governor of Louisiana wrote his uncle a letter, pledging him immunity from

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any blame in l'affaire 1900 and inviting him to come home. But the letter went unanswered, and three years later the major died. The \$9,000,000 went to the government of the crown colony, as far as fireman Burke knows; certainly he never got his hands on a nickel of it.

## \$64 Question

QUESTION No. 21 on the public information questionnaire handed to both raw and veteran recruits at the Army Recruiting Station here asks bluntly: "Reason for enlistment?"

Cpl. Charles L. Shirley, who screens the applicants, selected these answers as eloquent commentaries on the civilian way of life:

"Couldn't find anything better to do."

"For the excitement."

"See the rest of the world."

"Heard some old soldiers talking about it."

"Don't like being a civilian."

"Personal reason."

"Nothing."

"Tired of school."

"Both my parents are in the Army."

"To get away from a red-headed woman."

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